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Health Service Executive
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Oifig an Stiúrthóir Náisiúnta Soláthair
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
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Deputy Richard Bruton,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

07/12/2022

RE PQ 60985/22

Question

To ask the Minister for Health if an evaluation has been carried out of the procurement of supplies during the Covid pandemic to establish the successes and the disappointments of the emergency arrangements used to establish the lessons that can be learnt for the future; and if he will make a statement on the matter. - Richard Bruton

Response

Deputy Bruton,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Response Programme played a fundamental role in Ireland's pandemic response. The primary function of the programme has been to source and distribute the necessary level of PPE required by healthcare settings, while at the same time meeting the Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) clinical requirements on a national scale in a sustainable and systematic way.

Through significant effort and commitment, the HSE, with multi-agency support, succeeded in identifying key suppliers and securing supplies of PPE at the height of the pandemic and from this point onwards, the availability of PPE stock improved dramatically. These levels of availability have remained stable since May 2020.

A PPE forecasting model has been developed based on calculations derived from various inputs and clinical guidance, which will form the basis for ordering the national stock of PPE from both domestic and international markets and for issuing PPE to all healthcare locations in Ireland. This forecasting model is subject to on-going review and a review of the current arrangements for PPE supply is due shortly.

The forecasting supply model informs the funding sanctions for PPE and is based on a 3 month buffer stock in addition to the weekly quantity of PPE required determined by the clinical guidance from AMRIC.

The end-to-end management of PPE for the health service during the COVID-19 pandemic is among the largest logistical undertakings seen in the history of the state. As well as the scale of inbound PPE supply, a logistics and distribution network to service over 6,000 unique delivery locations (via mainly weekly delivery cycles) has been established. Approximately 1.2bn pieces of PPE have been supplied across the entire health system (public, private and voluntary) to service users, clinicians and staff across the full range of care settings, including: hospitals, nursing homes, long term residential care, primary care, dental, the National Ambulance Service (NAS) and General Practice, etc.

At the request of the Minister for Health, KPMG undertook a comprehensive audit in 2021 to assess the effectiveness with which the HSE met its objectives in relation to PPE during 2020, giving due consideration to

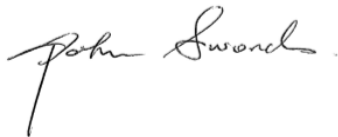
the operating environment. The audit took account of the clinical guidance in place in relation to usage, the practical experience in actual use of PPE, the relative rates of usage across the system and arrangements to ensure the most cost-effective approach across procurement, financial and stock management systems.

The Audit report made a number of recommendations in relation to the management of PPE and a detailed work programme has been developed to coordinate appropriate actions required. KPMG were engaged in 2022 to provide assurance on the recommendations completed (Assurance provided that 70% recommendations implemented and work ongoing to implement remaining recommendations).

The HSE is committed to the continuous improvement and the sustainable management of PPE as a key aspect of our COVID-19 response and future pandemic preparedness.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact the Office of the Head of Procurement on (01) 635 2688 or via john.swords@hse.ie

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Swords', with a small flourish at the end.

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